

Proposed FFGAs

In addition to the funding recommendations for existing and pending Federal commitments discussed above, FTA anticipates that five projects will be ready for new FFGAs before the end of FY 2007: the West Corridor LRT project in Denver, Colorado; the South Corridor I-205/Portland Mall LRT project in Portland, Oregon; the Wilsonville to Beaverton Commuter Rail project in Washington County, Oregon; the Northwest/Southeast LRT MOS project in Dallas, Texas; and the Weber County to Salt Lake City Commuter Rail project in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In anticipation of these commitments, FTA recommends that a total of \$302.60 million be appropriated for these projects in FY 2007. These projects received project ratings of *Medium* or higher under the criteria specified by SAFETEA-LU, and have either a *Medium* rating for cost effectiveness or have been specifically exempted from the requirement for a *Medium* cost effectiveness rating. The \$302.60 million funding recommendation is based on the anticipated capital needs of each of these projects in FY 2007. Each project was authorized in SAFETEA-LU for final design and construction. The summary descriptions provided in the following pages are presented alphabetically by State. More detailed descriptions of these projects are included in Appendix A.

Colorado: Denver, West Corridor LRT

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) is proposing the West Corridor project, a 12-station, 12.1-mile light rail transit (LRT) system extending from RTD's existing LRT line near Colfax Avenue and Interstate 25 (I-25), and following the former Associated Rail right-of-way and US 6, to US 6 / US 40 in Jefferson County, Colorado. The proposed project connects with the Central Platte Valley light rail extension and the Central Corridor light rail line at the existing Auraria station in downtown Denver. The West Corridor LRT would also provide connections to the second largest employment center in the Denver metropolitan area, the Denver Tech Center, via the Southeast Corridor light rail line currently under construction.

The West Corridor LRT parallels West 6th Avenue, which carries the second highest traffic volume in the region. Regional projections indicate that local traffic will increase 20 percent by 2025, and population and employment will increase by approximately one-third. Intended as a high-capacity transit alternative to West 6th Avenue, the West Corridor LRT project is designed to improve transit travel times in the corridor and to increase transit connectivity to regional employment centers currently underserved by public transportation.

RTD completed a Final EIS in October 2003 and FTA issued a NEPA Record of Decision in April 2004. In November 2004, Denver-area voters passed RTD's FasTracks funding plan, which increases RTD's sales tax revenues and is anticipated to support the construction of over 100 miles of new rail transit (including the Denver West

LRT project) and a 24 percent increase in local bus service. FTA approved the West Corridor LRT project into final design in August 2005. FTA expects to execute an FFGA for the project in late FY 2006 or 2007. Revenue operations are scheduled to begin in 2013.

SAFETEA-LU Section 3043(b)(7) authorizes the Denver West Corridor LRT project for final design and construction. The capital cost for the 12.1-mile West Corridor LRT project is estimated to be \$593.0 million, of which RTD is seeking \$290.6 million, or 49 percent, in New Starts funding. Through FY 2006, Congress has appropriated \$4.90 million in New Starts funding for this project. FTA recommends \$35.00 million in New Starts funds for this project in FY 2007.

Oregon: Portland/South Corridor I-205/Portland Mall LRT

The Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District (TriMet) and Portland Metro, the region's metropolitan planning organization, are proposing to construct 8.3 miles of new light rail transit (LRT) guideway consisting of two segments connecting to the existing "MAX" LRT system along Interstate 84 (I-84). Long-range regional forecasts point toward increasing traffic congestion along the I-205 corridor, for trips both originating and terminating in the southeastern metropolitan Portland area. The intent of the South Corridor I-205/Portland Mall LRT project is to address increased travel demand in this rapidly growing corridor; to provide additional fixed guideway access between regional activity centers; and to help the Portland region achieve its land use, development, and growth management goals and objectives.

The first segment of the proposed project is a 6.5-mile double-track line that runs north/south and parallel to I-205, connecting the Clackamas Regional Center in southeast Portland with the Gateway Transit Center east of downtown on TriMet's existing LRT system. The second segment of the project is a 1.8-mile LRT spur which would begin at the existing Rose Quarter Transit Center and terminate at Portland State University in south downtown Portland. This new LRT alignment, which would run along the existing downtown bus mall on 5th and 6th Avenues, is needed because TriMet's existing downtown LRT line (to the region's west side) does not have the capacity to carry the additional eight trains per peak hour into the central business district (CBD) that will result from the I-205 extension.

Metro completed a Final EIS for the project in December 2004 and FTA issued a Record of Decision in February 2005. FTA approved the project into final design in October 2005. FTA expects to execute an FFGA for the project in late FY 2006 or 2007. Revenue operations are anticipated to commence in late 2009.

SAFETEA-LU Section 3043(b)(27) authorizes the South Corridor I-205/Portland Mall LRT project for final design and construction. The capital cost for the 8.3-mile project is estimated at \$557.4 million, of which Tri-Met and Metro are requesting \$334.4 million, or 60 percent, in New Starts funding. Through FY 2006, Congress has not appropriated New Starts funding for this project. FTA recommends \$80.00 million in New Starts funding for this project in FY 2007.

Oregon: Washington County/Wilsonville to Beaverton Commuter Rail

The Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet), in conjunction with Portland Metro, the Oregon Department of Transportation, Washington and Clackamas Counties, and the cities of Wilsonville, Tualatin, Tigard, and Beaverton, is proposing to construct a 14.7-mile commuter rail line in the Wilsonville-Beaverton corridor. The proposed project would operate along portions of existing Union Pacific Railroad tracks and connect to TriMet's Westside MAX light rail transit (LRT) system at the Beaverton Transit Center.

Washington County is forecast to absorb a significant share of the Portland metropolitan area's growth over the next 20 years, resulting in increased travel demand throughout the county and for trips destined for other parts of the region. The physical geography of the corridor and adopted regional plans and policies limit the ability to significantly expand highway facilities. At the same time, the rail right-of-way that would be used by the project is underutilized, and provides the potential for additional transportation capacity. The Wilsonville to Beaverton Commuter Rail project is intended to connect rapidly growing suburban communities in western Washington County via a reliable guideway transit alternative that will offer travel-time savings as compared to local and express bus service. The project is further intended to shape future development in the corridor, consistent with local and regional land use goals and objectives.

FTA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact for the project in January 2001. FTA approved the project into final design in May 2004. FTA expects to execute an FFGA for the project in FY 2006. Revenue operations are scheduled to begin in 2008.

SAFETEA-LU Section 3043(b)(37) authorizes the Wilsonville to Beaverton Commuter Rail project for final design and construction. The capital cost for the 14.7-mile project is estimated to be \$117.3 million, of which TriMet is seeking \$58.7 million, or 50 percent, in New Starts funding, although this amount exceeds the amount requested at the time of final design approval and may be reduced prior to execution of the FFGA. Through FY 2006, Congress has appropriated \$31.26 million in New Starts funding for this project. FTA recommends \$27.60 million in New Starts funds for this project in FY 2007.

Texas: Dallas/Northwest/Southeast LRT MOS

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) is proposing to construct a 21-mile, two-segment extension of its light rail transit (LRT) system. The Southeast (SE) segment extends 10.1 miles from the Dallas central business district (CBD) to Buckner Boulevard. The Northwest (NW) segment extends 10.9 miles from the existing Victory Station to the city of Farmers Branch. A locally-funded extension of the NW line to Frankford Road in Carrollton is also being advanced by DART. The NW and SE LRT alignments would be connected through the existing four-station CBD Transitway Mall.

The NW segment, which generally parallels Interstate 35 East (I-35 E) (a major north-south arterial), is a growing employment area and a major North American Free Trade Agreement cargo route. Traffic on I-35 E, adjacent to the NW segment, is projected to increase 45 percent by 2025. Truck traffic is estimated to increase nearly 80 percent by

2011 in the NW segment corridor. Approximately one-third of SE Corridor households are considered low-income; nearly 17 percent of households do not own a car, more than double the percentage of zero-car households within Dallas County. By linking residents in the SE segment to the Dallas CBD and employment areas in the NW segment, the project is intended to provide a more reliable alternative than existing bus service, thereby ameliorating daily travel times in the entire NW/SE corridor, while improving mobility and accessibility throughout the corridor and in other parts of the region served by the DART LRT system.

DART completed separate EISs for each project in October 2003 (including the locally-funded NW segment extension). FTA issued Records of Decision for both projects in February 2004. FTA approved the Northwest/Southeast LRT MOS project into final design in June 2005. FTA expects to execute an FFGA for the project in FY 2006. Revenue operations are scheduled to begin in 2011.

SAFETEA-LU Section 3043(b)(5) authorizes the Dallas Northwest/Southeast LRT MOS for final design and construction. The capital cost of the 21-mile project is estimated to be \$1,406.2 million, of which DART is seeking \$700.00 million, or 50 percent, in New Starts funding. Through FY 2006, Congress has appropriated \$21.19 million in New Starts funding for this project. FTA recommends \$80.00 million in New Starts funds for this project in FY 2007.

Utah: Salt Lake City/Weber County to Salt Lake City Commuter Rail

The Utah Transit Authority (UTA) is proposing to construct the 43-mile Weber County to Salt Lake City Commuter Rail project. The project includes eight stations to serve the areas of Pleasant View, Ogden, Clearfield, Layton, Bountiful and downtown Salt Lake City. The commuter rail line would operate within an existing railroad corridor parallel to Interstate 15 (I-15), utilizing right-of-way (ROW) previously acquired by UTA under a rail corridor preservation plan with certain facilities already in place. Bus and light rail transit connections are intended to provide further service to other travel markets, including Weber State University, Hill Air Force Base, Freeport Center, the University of Utah, the Medical Center, and to the areas of Sandy and Draper in the southern part of Salt Lake City. The Weber County to Salt Lake City Commuter Rail project is the northern segment of a planned commuter rail system extending beyond downtown Salt Lake City to Provo.

Regional travel forecasts demonstrate that current levels of vehicle congestion on I-15 will continue in the future despite planned highway improvements. The Weber County to Salt Lake City Commuter Rail project is intended to be part of a multimodal solution to the problem of increased travel demand in the corridor. The project would improve the reliability and speed of transit service, thereby attracting more ridership and providing for expanded transportation capacity within the narrow I-15 corridor.

UTA completed the Final EIS in February 2005 and FTA issued a Record of Decision in April 2005. FTA approved the project into final design in June 2005. FTA expects to execute an FFGA for the project in FY 2006. Revenue operations are scheduled to begin in September 2008.

SAFETEA-LU Section 3043(b)(30) authorizes the Weber County to Salt Lake City Commuter Rail project for final design and construction. The capital cost for the 43-mile commuter rail project is estimated to be \$611.7 million, of which UTA is seeking \$489.3 million, or 80 percent, in New Starts funding. Division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, permits UTA to count completed and future highway and transit expenditures to meet the local financial share requirements for the Weber County to Salt Lake City Commuter Rail project. UTA's latest financial plan therefore, proposes an 80 percent share of New Starts funding matched by the value of project ROW and local revenues.

Through FY 2006, Congress has appropriated \$31.73 million in New Starts funding for this project. FTA recommends \$80.00 million in New Starts funds for this project in FY 2007.